



Senecio parryi A. Gray in New Mexico

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A Brief History of the Species

Senecio parryi was described by Asa Gray (1859) in John Torrey's "Report on the United States and Mexico Boundary... Botany," from a specimen collected in 1852 by Charles Christopher Parry in Chihuahua, Mexico, across from present-day Big Bend National Park, Brewster County, Texas. The original description by Gray was as follows:

SENECIO PARRYI (sp. nov.): herbaceus, viscoso-pubescent; caule striato; ramis oligocephalis; foliis argute inaequaliter dentatis, caulinis spathulatis inferne longe attenuatis basi dilatata auriculato-amplexantibus, ramealibus summis lanceolatis; bracteis setaceo-subulatis; capitulis breviter pedunculatis; involucri (semipollicari) paucibracteolati squamis acuminatis; ligulis 12–15; acheniis sericeo-cinereis — In live-oak groves, 150 miles above the mouth of the Pecos, on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande, November; Parry. Root not seen. Stem, etc., slightly floccose when young. Cauline leaves 2 inches or more in length. Ligules oblong, yellow, half an inch long.

There are two extant specimens of this collection. The holotype at GH has two plants; the one on the right is the type (from <https://s3.amazonaws.com/huhwebimages/E12421D5DE2946A/type/full/263980.jpg>):



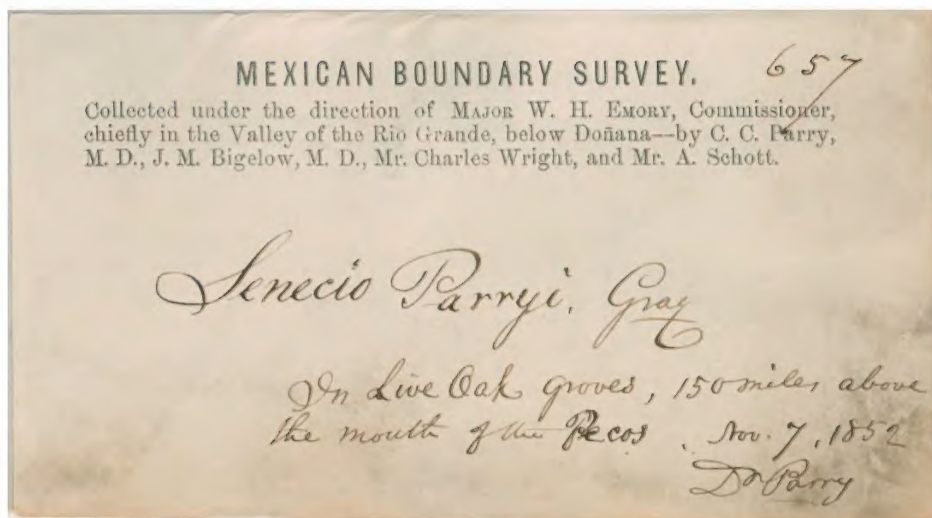
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An isotype of Parry's collection is at NY (from <http://sweetgum.nybg.org/images3/519/010/00233391.jpg>):



Sometime prior to the publication of “Flora of New Mexico” (Wooton & Standley 1915), E.O. Wooton had found this species at the town of Mogollon. Here is the entry in the “Flora of New Mexico”:

8. *Senecio parryi* A. Gray in Torr. U. S. & Mex. Bound. Bot. 103. 1859.
TYPE LOCALITY: “In live-oak groves, 150 miles above the mouth of the Pecos, on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande.”
RANGE: Southwestern New Mexico to southern California and adjacent Mexico.
NEW MEXICO: Mogollon (*Wooton*). Mountains, in the Transition Zone.
A most distinct species, entirely different from all our others by its viscid pubescence.

The entry for the New Mexico distribution, “Mogollon (*Wooton*),” indicates that its presence at Mogollon is apparently based on a specimen by Wooton, perhaps collected in the early 1900s. We have been unable to locate this specimen, nor any others of this species from New Mexico. The report for *Senecio parryi* for New Mexico in Flora North America (Barkley 2006) was presumably based on Wooton & Standley’s (1915) report. Until now, there have been no known specimens of *Senecio parryi* A. Gray from New Mexico.

Rediscovery of *Senecio parryi* in New Mexico

While on a hike in the western Mogollon Mountains on 27 August 2022, RV found a species of Compositae along the two-track, Powerhouse Trail leading down to Whitewater Creek. She sent photos of the plant to KWA, RK, Tim Lowrey, and Patrick Alexander. Lowrey and Alexander confirmed the plant to be *Senecio parryi* A. Gray. On 6 September 2022, the three of us (RV, KWA, RK) headed back to her site to obtain voucher specimens, photos, and search for other plants. We found about 10 plants scattered along the trail, and collected vouchers from one site:

New Mexico: Catron County: eastern slopes of the Mogollon Mts, along Forest Road 722 (Powerhouse Trail #810) that leads down to Whitewater Creek, about 0.6 miles down from parking area, N33.37660° W108.81205°, 6715 ft, in oak-piñon-juniper woodland with *Pinus edulis*, *Quercus grisea*, *Q. emoryi*, *Cercocarpus brevifolius*, *Muhlenbergia emersleyi*, *Glandularia pubera*, and *Bouteloua curtipendula*, in very gravelly/cobbly disturbed ground of old road/trail adjacent to rock slide, full sun, not found on surrounding hillsides, two plants at this site, several more down trail, 6 Sept 2022, with Radha Veach & Russ Kleinman, Kelly W. Allred 11173 (NMC, SNM).

After learning that *Senecio parryi* might also still occur at the town of Mogollon, RV searched that area on 10 September 2022. She found *S. parryi* to be abundant there, beginning at the large drainage ditch about 0.5 miles west of town to about 2 miles or so on the other (east) side of town. She did not search beyond that point. Plants were common in disturbed ground, especially along the streams and drainage canals, but also sometimes further off-road in sunny patches under ponderosa pine. She collected the following voucher:

New Mexico: Catron County: Mogollon Mts west of the town of Mogollon, along Bursum Road (hwy 159) about 0.5 miles west of Mogollon, N33.39342° W108.80192°, 6537 ft, disturbed ground at bottom of deep drainage ravine lined by river stones held in place by wire netting, within ponderosa-juniper-oak community, with *Verbascum thapsus*, *Brickellia*, *Ericameria nauseosa*, and various weedy forbs, 10 Sept 2022, Radha Veach s.n. (SNM).

As far as we know, these two collections are the only known specimens of *Senecio parryi* from New Mexico. They were found almost exactly 1.0 air miles apart.

Nearly all our plants were found in highly disturbed habitats. This holds true for many of the online plants we consulted from Arizona, Texas, and Sonora (SEINet 2022): “dry wash bottoms,” “gravelly slope of landslide area,” “along roadside,” “in rock slide,” “prairie dog town,” and “north end of parking lot,” though many specimens were without specific habitat information or more general data such as “oak hillside,” “rocky ridge,” “in riparian forest,” and “in oak woodland.”

Identification of *Senecio parryi*

Among species of *Senecio* and *Packera*, *S. parryi* is easily distinguished: thick-based forbs, herbage distinctly viscid-

pubescent and noticeably malodorous, cauline leaves abundant (basal leaves withering in age), cauline blades essentially sessile-clasping and sinuate-dentate, and calyculi easily distinguished from the phyllaries.

Photos

From the 6 September site, along the trail leading to Whitewater Creek (photos by Radha Veatch, Kelly Allred, and Russ Kleinman):

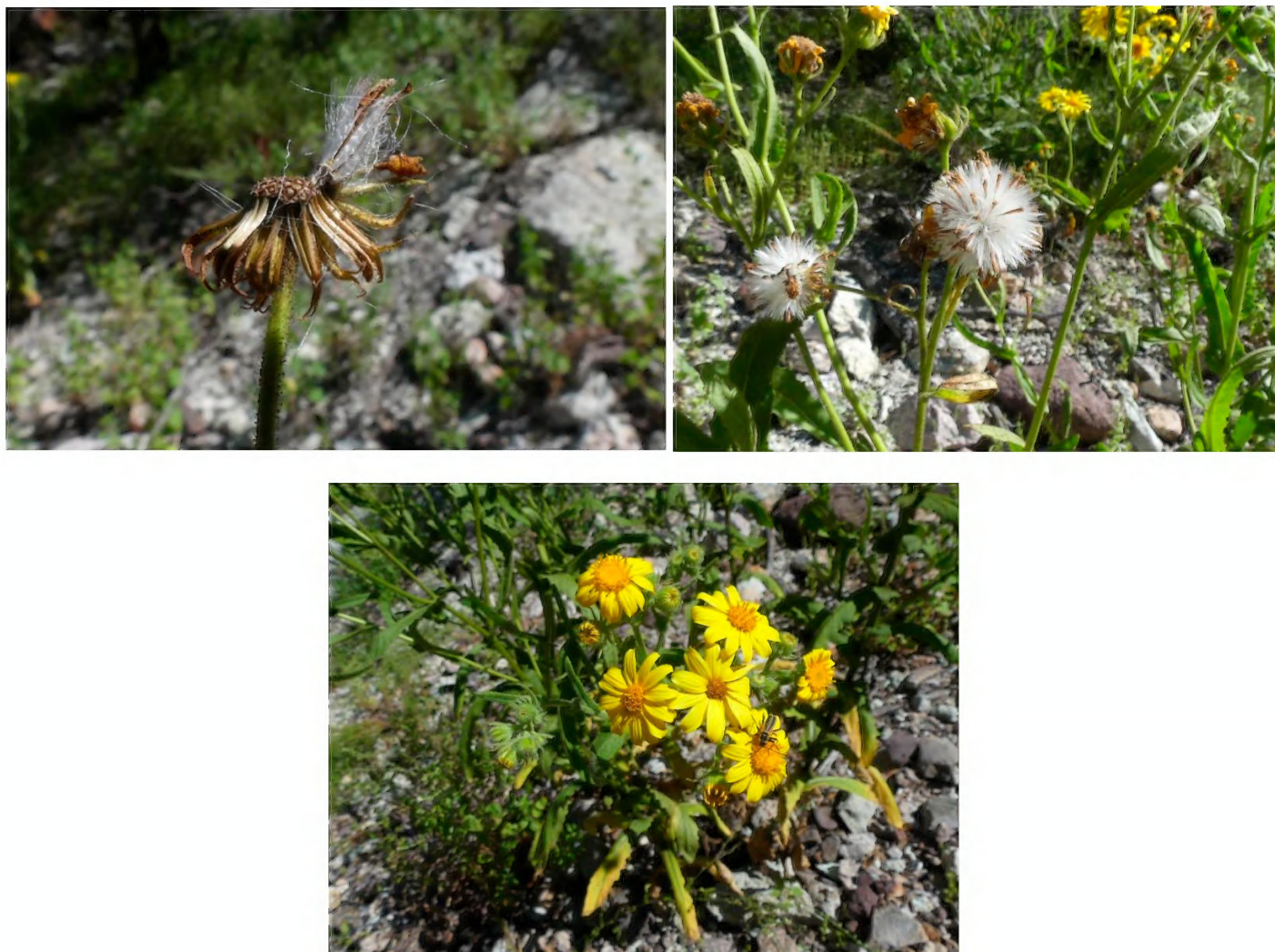




From the 10 September site 0.5 miles west of Mogollon and along Bursum road to the east (photos by Radha Veach):







Acknowledgements

We thank Tim Lowrey and Patrick Alexander for confirming our suspicions and providing a quick and authoritative identification. Especial thanks to the curators and staff of various herbaria who have scanned and posted digitized images of their collections, particularly GH and NY, from whom we obtained photos of the type collection.

Literature Cited

Barkley, T.M. 2006. *Senecio parryi*, p. 568. IN: Flora of North America, vol. 20.
 Gray, A. 1859. Report on the United States and Mexico Boundary...Botany 2(1): 103.
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 Wootton, E.O. & P.C. Standley. 1915. Flora of New Mexico. Contr. U.S. Nat. Herbarium 19: 1-794.

13 September 2022

Dear New Mexico Botanists,

The surest way to be caught in a mistake is to make a statement about a plant and send it around to 100 or so botanists! E.O. Wootton's collection of *Senecio parryi* does indeed still exist, and is to be found at the U.S. National Herbarium. For whatever reason, this specimen does not appear in the SEINet database, so we missed it. A photo is attached. It was collected 8 Aug 1900, from Mogollon.

Many thanks to Harpo Faust of the UNM Herbarium for providing this information to us!

Kelly Allred

P.S. The moral of this story? If you never want to be caught in an error, never write anything!

P.P.S. We can always trust E.O. Wootton!

